

 KUALA LUMPUR: Parti Sosialis Malaysia (PSM) has proposed a dialogue with the Home Ministry to negotiate the release of its leaders who were detained under the Emergency Ordinance.

Its secretary-general S. Arutchelvan said the group submitted a letter on Monday to discuss the matter with minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein and Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Ismail Omar.

◆ We are a registered political group. All our activities are open to the public, ◆ he told a press conference at the Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall yesterday.

The six PSM leaders, including Sungai Siput MP Dr Michael Jeyakumar, have been under EO detention since July 2 for allegedly supporting Bersih and possessing T-shirts with faces of communist leaders on them.

Under the EO, detainees can be held for 60 days, with a possible extension of two years or more, without trial.

◆ Why are our leaders still detained now that the Bersih rally is over? ◆ Arutchelvan asked.

He said they had proposed to meet on July 25, adding that an aide to the Home Minister had said Hishammuddin was away from the country and would be back on Friday.

The High Court has set Friday to hear the habeas corpus application by the six on grounds that their detention is unlawful.

Meanwhile, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Nazri Aziz said police, who had the final say on security matters, were not wrong in using the EO against the six.

◆ We politicians leave it to the police. They have the final say, ◆ he said yesterday.

Nazri said the EO had been in place since the Emergency to fight communism, and it was still enforceable now to ensure the ◆ incident will not recur. ◆

◆ Communism is not dead. The belief still exists but it is illegal and banned in Malaysia. Even though there is a ceasefire, it does not mean that we have accepted communism, ◆ he said.